

Andrew Jackson, March 1, 1833, from Correspondence of Andrew Jackson. Edited by John Spencer Bassett.

SECOND INAUGURAL ADDRESS.¹

¹ Rough draft, in Jackson's handwriting. This inaugural address, like the first delivered by Jackson, was liberally revised before it was delivered. A comparison with the copy in Richardson's *Messages*, III. 3–5, shows that the seventh and eighth paragraphs of this draft were radically altered.

March 1, 1833.

Fellow Citizens. The will of the American people, expressed through their unsolicited suffrages, calls me before you to pass through the solemnities preparatory to taking upon myself the duties of President of the united states for another term of four years. For their approbation of my administration through a period which has not been without its difficulties, and for this renewed expression of their confidence in my good intentions, I find no adequate terms to express my heartfelt gratitude. It shall be displayed to the extent of my humble powers, in continued efforts, so to administer their government as to preserve their liberty, and promote their happiness.

So many incidents have occurred within the last four years which have necessarily called forth, sometimes under circumstances the most delicate and painful, my views of the principles and policy which ought to be pursued by the general government, that I need but touch upon them now.

The foreign policy adopted by our government soon after the adoption of the present constitution, and very generally pursued by each successive administration, has been crowned with almost compleat success, and has elevated our character among the nations

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of the earth. To do justice to all, and submit to wrong from none, has been during my administration, its governing maxim, and so happy have been its results, that we are not only at peace with all the world, but few causes of controversy, and those of minor importance, are left to be adjusted. Our discussion with foreign powers will hereafter relate to little else than commercial treaties and arrangements, having in view the advancement of our trade on terms of perfect reciprocity with all maritime nations.

In the domestic policy of this government, there are two Objects which especially deserve the attention of the people and their Rulers and which have been, and will continue to be, the objects of my increasing solicitude. They are, The preservation of the reserved rights of the several states and the integrity of the union.

My experience in public *concerns* , and the observation of a life somewhat advanced, confirm the impressions long since imbibed by me, that the destruction of our state governments, or the annihilation of their control over the local concerns of the people, would lead directly to revolution and anarchy, and finally to despotism and military domination. In proportion, therefore, as the general government encroaches upon the rights of the states, in the same proportion does it impair its own power and detract from its ability to fulfil the purposes of its creation. Solemnly impressed with these considerations, my countrymen will ever find me raising my voice, and if need be, exercising as I have already done, the power they have placed in my hands, to repress any measures which may, directly or indirectly, encroach on the reserved rights of the states or tend to consolidate all political power in the general government. Rather than to create discontents and heartburnings among the people, or the states, I deem it far better to refrain from the exercise of even rightful powers, unless it be necessary to the preservation of the government or the safety of the people.

Equally important is the preservation of our union and the support of the general government in the exercise of its essential powers. Without union our independence and liberty would never have been achieved, without union they can never be maintained.

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Divided into twenty four or even a smaller number of separate communities, we shall see our internal trade burdened by numberless restraints and exactions, communication between distant points and persons obstructed, or cut off, our sons made soldiers to deluge with blood the fields they now till in peace, the mass of our people borne down and impoverished by taxes to support armies and navies, and military leaders, at the head of their victorious legions, becoming our lawgivers and judges. The loss of liberty, of all good government, of peace, plenty and happiness, must inevitably follow a dissolution of the Union. In supporting the union, therefore, we support all that is dear to the freeman and philanthropist.

The time at which I stand before you is one of portentous importance. The eyes of the world are fixed on our Republic. The event of the existing crisis will be decisive in the opinion of mankind of the practicability, or impracticability of the federal system of government. Great is the stake which mankind have in our hands; great is the responsibility which must rest upon [the people of the United States.] Let us realize the interesting attitude in which we stand before the world. Let us exercise forbearance and firmness. Let us extricate our country from the dangers which surround it and learn wisdom from the lessons they inculcate. That people is not best governed who have the most laws. Legislation which is partial in its objects or effect, which depresses one man or interest at the expence of another, or is supposed to do so, will ever lead to discontents, murmurings, dissention and revolution. Government should treat all alike; and the surest means of attaining that end, is to let all alone as far as is compatible with publick justice, peace and safety. To bring our government to the adoption and practice of this principle in its legislation as well as its general administration, and thereby to preserve it as a blessing to America and an example to the world, will continue to be the object of my increasing solicitude.

In the mean time, misguided men must not be permitted, in effect to correct existing abuses or in pursuance of less worthy designs, to impair or overthrow a system of government which is the pride of our fathers, and the only hope of ourselves and our

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posterity. If, in madness or delusion, any one shall lift his paracidal hand against this blessed union, which, like Heavens Canopy, spreads over us all, and if it does not make us all happy, protects us from unnumbered ills, the arms of tens of thousands will be raised to save it, and the curse of millions will fall upon the head which may have plotted its destruction. For myself, when I approach the sacred volume and take a solemn Oath to support and defend this constitution, I feel in the depths of my soul, that it is the highest, most sacred and most irreversible part of my obligation, to *preserve the union of these states, although it may cost me my life* .

Finally it is my most fervent prayer to that almighty being before whom I now stand, Him who has hitherto protected our country in war, and so signally blessed it in peace, that He will teach us justice and moderation, allay excited passions, lead back the misguided to the path of reason and duty, and spare me the painful necessity of resorting to these terrible powers which are vested in me by the constitution and acts of congress, to execute the laws, suppress insurrection, and repel invasion.